Products to India is carried on both Indian and Foreign vesels. depending on the freight rates offered and availability of ships. The Indian tanker tonnage consist of 111 vessels as on 31.10.2006. These ships are engaged in either carrying Indian cargo or are enagaged in cross trade. 34% of India POL Exim trade was transported on Indian flag vessels during 2004-05.

(c) The Government has been taking various measures from time to time for the growth of Indian tonnage including tanker tonnage. These include:

(i) The acquisition of vessels has been brought under Open General Licence. The Shipowners are free to decide on type of ships to be acquired and their area of operation etc.

(ii) 100% FDI is permitted in Shipping Sector.

(iii) Rate of depreciation increased from 20% to 25%.

(iv) Tonnage Tax has been introduced from 2004-05 whereby in the matter of taxation a level playing field has been given to Indian Shipping Industry *vis-a-vis* international shipping industries.

(v) The formalities of registration of newly acquired vessels have been simplified.

Work contracts on BoT basis

977. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Model Concession Agreement on work contracts on BoT basis on National Highways and Expressways was finalized in March, 2006;

(b) whether it is a fact that not even a single BoT contract has been awarded since finalization of MCA in March, 2006, and if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Planning Commission has stipulated a pre-condition of 80% land acquisition for award of BoT contracts; and

(d) whether the toll policy for BoT projects has since been finalized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Planning Commissioin has finalized the Model Concession Agreement (MCA) for Public Private Partnership (PPP) contracts for roads duly approved by the Committee on Infrastructure (CoI) in its meeting held on 27.09.2005.

(b) 10 contracts have been awarded on BoT (Toll)/BoT (Annuity) basis since March, 2006.

(c) Planning Commission has stipulated a pre-condition of 80% land acquisition to be handed over on or before appointed date for BOT contracts.

(d) Toll policy as per the MCA is yet to be finalized. However,Government has allowed to use the new MCA with existing toll policy till such time new policy is finalized by Committee of Secretaries.

Overloaded Freight Vehicles

978. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether overloading of freight vehicles causes serious damage to roads and highways by premature wear and tear of the surface;

(b) whether the Supreme Court had upheld, in 2005 the Motor Vehicle Act 1988 saying that the offence of overloading cannot be compounded by permitting the carrier to proceed on its journey with excess load;

(c) whether Government would consider imposing additional toll charges on overloaded vechicles even upto 100 per cent; and

(d) whether Government would install tamper-proof weighing machines along the highways to check and regulate overloading?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Toll on Highways is an user charge. Imposing additional toll on overloaded vehicles cannot be used as a penalty to control overloading.